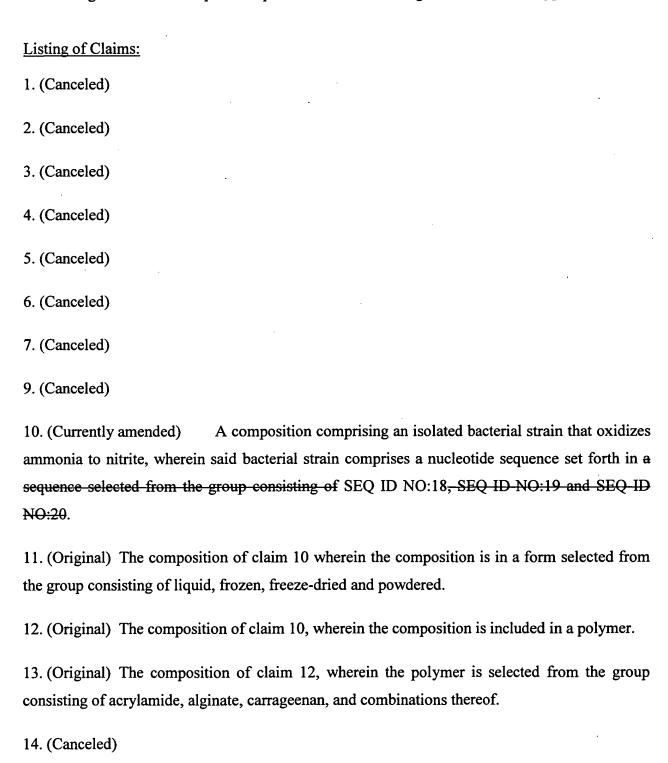
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.



15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently amended) A composition comprising a concentrated bacterial strain that oxidizes ammonia to nitrite, wherein the 16S rDNA of the bacterial strain has a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of: a nucleotide sequence that has at least 96% identity over the full length thereof to SEQ ID NO:18, a nucleotide sequence that has at least 96% identity over the full length thereof to SEQ ID NO:19 and a nucleotide sequence that has at least 96% identity over the full length thereof to SEQ ID NO:20.

18. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 17 wherein said bacterial strain has a 16S rDNA sequence which is identical to a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:18, SEQ ID NO:19 and SEQ ID NO:20.

19. (Original) The composition of claim 17, further comprising a microorganism selected from the group consisting of ammonia-oxidizing microorganisms, nitrite-oxidizing microorganisms, nitrate-reducing microorganisms, heterotrophic microorganisms, and combinations thereof.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Canceled)

22. (Currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid selected from the group consisting of: a nucleotide sequence that has at least 96% identity over the full length thereof to SEQ ID NO:18, a nucleotide sequence that has at least 96% identity over the full length thereof to SEQ ID NO:19 and a nucleotide sequence that has at least 96% identity over the full length thereof to SEQ ID NO:20, wherein the nucleic acid encodes function for oxidizing ammonia to nitrite.

23. (Currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of claim 22 wherein said sequence is identical to a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:18, SEQ ID NO:19 and SEQ ID NO:20.

24. (Canceled)

- 25. (Canceled)
- 26. (Canceled)
- 27. (Canceled)
- 28. (Canceled)
- 29. (Canceled)
- 30. (Canceled)
- 31. (Canceled)
- 32. (Currently amended) A composition comprising a bacterial strain that oxidizes ammonia to nitrite including a nucleotide sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:18 and at least one other two bacterial strains that oxidizes ammonia to nitrite, wherein each of the at least one other two bacterial strains have has 16S rDNA including a nucleotide sequence independently selected from the group consisting of: a nucleotide sequence that has greater than 98% identity over the full length thereof to SEQ ID NO:3, a nucleotide sequence that has at least 96% identity over the full length thereof to SEQ ID NO:1, a nucleotide sequence that has at least 96% identity over the full length thereof to SEQ ID NO:2, a nucleotide sequence that has at least 96% identity over the full length thereof to SEQ ID NO:18, a nucleotide sequence that has at least 96% identity over the full length thereof to SEQ ID NO:19 and a nucleotide sequence that has at least 96% identity over the full length thereof to SEQ ID NO:19 and a nucleotide sequence that has at least 96% identity over the full length thereof to SEQ ID NO:19 and a nucleotide sequence that has at least 96% identity over the full length thereof to SEQ ID NO:19 and a nucleotide sequence that has at least 96% identity over the full length thereof to SEQ ID NO:19 and a nucleotide sequence that has at least 96% identity over the full length thereof to SEQ ID NO:20.
- 33. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 32, said composition comprising a bacterial strain with a 16S rDNA including a nucleotide sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:1, a bacterial strain with a 16S rDNA including a nucleotide sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:2, a bacterial strain with a 16S rDNA including a nucleotide sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:3, a bacterial strain with a 16S rDNA including a nucleotide sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:4, a bacterial strain with a 16S rDNA including a nucleotide sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:18, a bacterial strain with a 16S rDNA including a nucleotide sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:18,

NO:19 and a bacterial strain with a 16S rDNA including a nucleotide sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:20.